

JPL tentatively OKs Paying \$3 Million in Cleanup of Wells

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PASADENA—The Jet Propulsion Laboratory has tentatively agreed to pay more than \$3 million to help clean up four contaminated wells.

Although city officials said they could make no formal statement about the agreement, Deputy City Manager Edward K. Aghjayan said the details should become final within the next two weeks. By then, he said, officials of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, which oversees operations of the lab, should have approved the agreement.

The settlement had been in the making throughout the 1980s, since pollution in the wells was discovered decades after the contamination from industrial solvents occurred. JPL has acknowledged that it probably played a role in polluting the wells.

Two of the wells were closed about five years ago, and the others have since been shut down.

"We feel real positive about it," said JPL spokeswoman Elizabeth Stetz. "It represents a good solution for Pasadena's prob-

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lem."

The city's negotiations with JPL yielded a two-part plan:

The lab tentatively agreed to make a lump sum payment "in excess of \$750,000," Aghjayan said. This will help compensate the city for its costs in coping with pollution near the facility, along the northwestern edge of Pasadena and the city's Arroyo Seco.

In addition, he said, the laboratory tentatively agreed to pay \$750,000 annually for three years to finance a new treatment facility designed to solve short-term pollution problems.

City officials approved the plans at the Board of Directors meeting Tuesday and at the zoning board Wednesday, Aghjayan said.

"We're quite pleased," Aghjayan said, calling the agreement and

pollution cleanup approach "a very creative solution." The lab, he said, "has shown a great deal of public spiritedness."

"Many times in situations like this you have to go to court," he said, "but I think we have an exciting conclusion to this."

The planned water treatment facility will start at once on decontaminating the four wells, while further tests are performed to determine how best to solve the long-term impact of the pollution, he said.

"This is the best of both worlds," Aghjayan said. "We solve our problems now. And then on a more accurate basis we can decide how to solve our long-term problems."

As water pollution has worsened during the last five years, the city has spent as much as \$850,000 a year to replace the water that would have been drawn from the polluted wells, Aghjayan said. The new treatment facility will eliminate that expense, he said.

The Pasadena area's Raymond Water Basin is distinct from the San Gabriel Valley Water Basin, which suffers from one of the most complicated ground-water pollution problems in the West and is a federal Superfund cleanup site.